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Press Release

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ATTORNEY GENERAL DARRELL V. MCGRAW, JR.
ENCOURAGES CONSUMERS TO WATCH THEIR MAIL FOR
RESTITUTION INFORMATION REGARDING THE
BRIDGESTONE/FIRESTONE SETTLEMENT

West Virginia Attorney General Darrell V. McGraw, Jr., wants to remind consumers that today Bridgestone/Firestone, Inc. is mailing out approximately 30,000 notices to consumers nationwide regarding the restitution program established by the Attorneys General in their \$51.5 million settlement with Bridgestone/Firestone, Inc., which was announced in November of 2001.

"We want to make sure all consumers understand the need to take timely action in this matter," Attorney General McGraw said. "We believe it is vital for anyone who feels they have been wrongly denied reimbursement to be afforded every opportunity available for reconsideration."

Today, the first round of notices was sent to all consumers (about 30,000) who requested reimbursement under Bridgestone/Firestone's Voluntary Safety Tire Recall Reimbursement Program or Customer Satisfaction Program. The notices included those who received a full denial of their refund request from Bridgestone/Firestone. Those consumers will receive a letter from the Attorneys General along with a reconsideration form. If the consumer wants his refund request to be reconsidered, he must return the reconsideration form to the following address: State Attorneys General Multistate Working Group - Attn: Bridgestone/Firestone Settlement, Post Office Box 5155, Des Plaines, IL 60019-9971. The form must be mailed no later than March 11, 2002. Consumers will also receive a list of contact persons who will be able to answer any questions they may have about the settlement.

In late January, an additional estimated 100,000 notices will be sent to consumers who requested reimbursement and received a partial denial from Bridgestone/Firestone, Inc. Again, consumers will have 60 days to return the reconsideration form to Bridgestone/Firestone, Inc. in order to be eligible for the restitution program.

Consumers who return the reconsideration form will have their denial reviewed by Bridgestone/Firestone under a credible evidence standard. Bridgestone/Firestone will either pay the request for a refund or contact the consumer and let the consumer know the reason for the denial and, further advise the consumer of his right to have his request reviewed by an independent arbitrator. The arbitration process is provided at no cost to consumers. The consumer must ask for an arbitration review within 45 days of being notified of the denial of the refund requested.

Bridgestone/Firestone has estimated that this restitution program will cost the company \$10 million. However, the settlement requires Bridgestone/Firestone to complete the restitution program regardless of cost.

If you have any questions regarding the refund procedure or the Bridgestone/ Firestone settlement, please call Attorney General McGraw's Consumer Protection Division at 1-800-368-8808 or 304-558-8986.

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